

PLANNING BOARD
ZONING DELINEATION WORKSHOP
January 21, 2010
APPROVED 3/2/2010

Members Present: William Curtin, Chair
Timothy Roy, Vice-Chair
Scott Williams, Clerk
D. Collier, Alternate
David Hussey, Selectmen's Representative

Others Present: Sharon Penney, Town Planner
Stacey Ames, Planning Assistant
David Lawrence, Conservation Commission member
Brendan Berube, Baysider

I. CALL TO ORDER

William Curtin, Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

II. ALTERNATES

No one to appoint

III. AGENDA

There were no changes to the Agenda.

IV. MINUTES

September 3, 2009, on page 1 in the members present, David Hussey should be recognized as the Selectmen's Rep. Also, Melissa Guldbrandsen's name is spelled wrong throughout the document, on page 3 about midway down it says "S. Curtin" should say "W. Curtin", page 4 fourth paragraph down "S. Penney said she know there" should read "she knows"..."application (add "which"), were...". On page 5 there was question as to who Mr. Houry was. S. Penney thought it should read Mr. Khoury. W. Curtin asked that the case number be included. Also on page 5 in the second paragraph, "Plan" should be "Planner" and "one" should be added before week.

Motion made by Timothy Roy to accept the minutes of September 3rd as amended. Seconded by William Curtin, vote: unanimous.

V. PUBLIC INPUT

W. Curtin opened the floor to public input; it will remain open for the duration of the workshop.

VI. WORKSHOP DISCUSSION

S. Penney introduced Mr. Lawrence from the Conservation Commission. The Board invited Mr. Lawrence to join them at the table. W. Curtin asked if Mr. Lawrence knew everyone on the Board. Mr. Lawrence stated he thought he knew most of them.

S. Penney asked if a chairman was elected or if a committee was formed. The Board was in agreement that they were all going to be on the committee. W. Curtin stated the meeting schedule was undetermined. The Board discussed this and decided the first and third Tuesday of the month at 5:00pm.

S. Penney asked about standing committees and where they stood because there were postings with specific dates and times that needed to be taken down if the committees were no longer established. T. Roy stated the Wind Energy Committee went away because the Town was supposed to establish an Energy Committee. W. Curtin stated there was the Class VI Road Committee which was over; S. Ames asked if the Board had to formally end a committee? W. Curtin stated they keep the committee open in the event something should happen.

Motion made by William Curtin to abolish any committee that is no longer active. Seconded by Scott Williams.

T. Roy asked if there was any word on when the Energy Committee will be up and running. D. Hussey stated it should be soon but he has not heard a date yet.

Vote: unanimous.

W. Curtin stated the Business Association met last night and what they were thinking of doing is sometime between now and their next meeting, see if they will come to us or we go to them. D. Hussey stated he will be at the next Business Association meeting and he told them they should get involved with the Delineation Committee so if they have something to say not to wait until everything is planned out and then show up wanting to make changes. T. Roy voiced his concerns that 5:00 meeting would make it hard for people to come. W. Curtin stated for now, until we have a direction to go in, 5:00 is fine for now which will give us the opportunity to get started because they will be busy with winter carnival so once that is done we can start fresh.

W. Curtin asked if the Conservation Commission had any comments. Mr. Lawrence stated they have not yet discussed it and he's not sure what the Board had in mind but suspects the areas they are considering for Commercial/Industrial zoning are not areas they would be overly concerned about in terms of them being close to conservation areas. W. Curtin stated the original areas under consideration were on Route 11 all the way down to the New Durham line on the East side on the road. After some discussion they narrowed it up from the traffic circle down five lots. There was a motion made and seconded to not put them on the ballot at all because the Board feels it needs to be much more fine tuned. D. Hussey stated it was much more than just picking out a spot. You have to do the whole plan. D. Hussey made a list of important aspects.

1. General purpose: Why are we doing this?
2. Do we want to do Commercial zone districts?
3. Use regulations for commercial.
4. Commercial development standards. What are we going to allow and what are we not going to allow?
5. Design standards.

What we need to do is create an Architectural Review Committee.

With that said, for general purposes, what we are looking to provide is an appropriate commercial area for retail and service establishments, neighborhood convenience, and office uses required by residents of the town in a manner consistent with the Master Plan. Provide adequate space to meet the needs of commercial development, including off-street parking and loading, minimize traffic congestion and avoid the overloading of utilities. Protect commercial area from excessive noise, illumination, unsightliness, odor, smoke, and other objectionable influences. Promote high standards for pedestrian safety, site planning and landscape design for commercial and office developments within the city. Provide employment opportunities for existing and future residents of the city and those of adjacent communities. Provide for land uses which meet the needs of and attract regional populations, in addition to local residents and ensure compatibility with adjacent land uses.

D. Hussey added this isn't just about wetlands, it's a huge project and that's how we have to tackle this. It's not just identifying if we want to go from here to Wolfeboro or here to New Durham, if we're going to do this project, it's got to be done correctly. We have to do an outline and stick to it. D. Hussey added there is category called "Village Commercial" and we have the opportunity to set it up the way we want it. We have the opportunity to control architecture, control where we put businesses around the circle. We heard people say they want to keep their cows and in a complete commercial zone, you can't have animals but in a commercial rural zone you can. These are things we need to look at in how we rezone. There are farms and they are going to want to keep operating and this is where we will meet our resistance if we don't think of everybody. S. Williams stated adding a village district that way we can preserve the village properly.

T. Roy stated to bring Mr. Lawrence up to speed, the only area we have commercial zone is basically from Wayside to Harmony Park. What happens is commercial entities like Dunkin Donuts, come in, buy a house and tear it down because that's there only option. What we're trying to do is be proactive instead of reactive in getting businesses where the town sees fit that will follow with the Master Plan. T. Roy asked Mr. Lawrence to relay that to the Conservation Commission. Mr. Lawrence asked if the Board was focusing on commercial/industrial type activities. D. Hussey stated all commercial and possibly some light industrial. W. Curtin added at this stage we can't tell anybody they can't come in. If it's zoned commercial, it's zoned commercial. S. Williams added that the Rural zone is wide open so we could get in trouble. We can only zone and regulate to what the zoning ordinance says. It's not what we feel in our hearts; it's what's on the printed page. D. Hussey stated he could give them some definitions on how to set up commercial zoning districts. Examples are:

1. Neighborhood Commercial Zone: Intended to provide for the continued use, expansion and new development of small-scale, low-intensity neighborhood commercial uses which serve and are in proximity to residential neighborhoods throughout the town.
2. Community Commercial Zone: intended to provide for larger commercial uses to serve the residents of the town and surrounding areas.

3. Regional Commercial Zone: Intended to provide for the development of commercial uses which cater to a wide market, including a full range of retail shops and services within a shopping center environment.
4. Office Professional Zone: Intended to provide for uses such as business and service offices, cultural and community facilities, financial institutions, legal and medical services, restaurants and other similar uses which represent major concentrations of community and employment activities.

This is how we can break this down, by matching the areas with the land. Mr. Lawrence added his biggest concern is the statement made about the Rural zone being wide open. There certainly are areas where there are concentrations of conservation lands and to put who knows what that is totally incompatible is a real concern. D. Hussey stated that was what he just finished saying that we can pick the areas and what we want to go in those areas if we plan for it today. S. Penney pointed out on the Future Land Use maps the large amount of rural zone and the interspersed conservation lands. D. Hussey stated we have to identify what commercial business is compatible with which area. D. Hussey added this type of input the Board needs from people and the community. We welcome the public to come give us their ideas now, not later. S. Penney stated the charrette will be a real open invitation for people to get involved. S. Williams added our area of focus is the main arteries coming into town because that's where people don't want to live so it's natural to put things of a commercial nature in the main artery because they want exposure, so it only makes sense to put them on the main arteries coming in and out of Town. S. William added a healthy town has a good balance of commercial and residential. D. Hussey added that Alton is lucky because we haven't gotten hit with a lot of commercial yet so we can protect our areas. T. Roy gave an example of next door at Maxfield Realty saying a Burger King could go in there and they already have the drive-up window. T. Roy also asked where would Burger King rather be, down town Alton or somewhere there is more exposure? S. Williams added if you plan reactively, you'll never catch up. D. Hussey reiterated we welcome public input business input, whoever to please come give us your ideas. S. Williams added our intent is **not** to make Alton look like Newton or Hookset but to keep the village look. D. Hussey added if we do get industry coming in, keep it back from the road, and hide it with trees with screening. Mr. Lawrence stated he applauds the efforts and thinks it is time well spent by getting ahead of the curve and giving plenty of opportunity to the public. S. Penney added that from a planning perspective, the upgrade of the circle, which is not going to be a huge impact, it's a good upgrade, is going to include a large pedestrian component, ie: sidewalks, to provide connectivity to the new bridge and Hannaford's so you've got that whole component of any zoning change which is pedestrian access so it's a golden opportunity to be looking at this stuff now. S. Williams added they hope to use the circle as the nucleolus because that is where your major exposure is and that's where you're going to see it. T. Roy added that it will also slow traffic down and from a logistic point of view, that's the best place to start. S. Penney also added that is one of the gateways to Alton. It's quite nice as it is but it could be enhanced with architectural review and we don't even have a "Welcome to Alton" sign. Everyone agreed there should be one in the circle.

S. Williams stated to Mr. Lawrence if he would go back to the Conservation Commission and get some ideas on their thoughts and if you're going to be the representative for them, you can come back and tell us what they want. S. Penney added that Timothy Morgan from the Zoning Board of Adjustment called and stated he wanted to be the representative for the Zoning Board. T. Roy asked Mr. Lawrence if 5:00 meetings fit into his schedule. Mr. Lawrence stated it was ok as far as his schedule was concerned and added the circle seemed like a good place to focus for the reasons that were mentioned. D. Hussey added that even around the circle, there isn't much land so after you get a few businesses in there; everyone else will have to go somewhere else. S. Williams commented that the land will become very valuable and the taxes generated from this could be huge. There was some discussion about the increased tax rate on commercial property and W. Curtin wanted it very clear that even if the zone changes, unless the property changes the tax rate will stay the same. What this means is if you already have a home on the parcel, your tax rate won't increase but if you put up a commercial use, the rate does change.

S. Williams wanted to touch on the increased services that someone had mentioned at a previous meeting, saying that the taxes that Hannaford's brings in doesn't create more work for the Town services. Speaking on behalf of the Fire Department, he doesn't think they have been called to Hannaford's more than twice so he doesn't agree that more commercial business will increase the town services needed. W. Curtin added the amount of people Hannaford's employees. W. Curtin asked Sharon to get in contact with Lakes Region Planning Commission. S. Williams asked Sharon to provide the Board with a tickler system or laundry list of good planning things the Board should be concerned about. S. Penney stated if they have anything they would like to see added to the list she started to let her know.

There was discussion regarding funding for LRPC. S. Penney added that we are members of LRPC and they provide us with information but big things such as a consultant basis may require money. S. Penney also added she was looking into funding and grants for the charrette. S. Williams would like to set a charrette date to give them something to work towards. There was more discussion about scheduling and finding a good cross section of the population to participate. T. Roy asked Brendan Berube of the Baysider to explain in an article what a charrette is. The Board suggested a charrette in mid April. S. Williams suggested a questionnaire for people wishing to partake in the charette so we get a little of their background. T. Roy suggested each member of the Planning Board be a part of a different group and spread out other Town Boards and Department Heads to participate and spread them out through the groups. S. Williams felt it was important to for the Highway Department, Police Department, Fire Department to look at all the pros and cons. W. Curtin added Buildings and Grounds too because with sidewalks going through town, they will need to plow them.

The Board decided they would meet to decide the outline before they get everyone else involved. S. Williams suggest a light industrial zone because it would provide great professional employment opportunity, not just minimum wage jobs.

The Board set a tentative schedule of meeting the first and third Tuesday of the month. D. Hussey suggested taking the minutes and provide an outline of what specifically was discussed so they can look at it and know what the highlights of the conversation was. S. Penney stated she would do that.

S. Williams added that S. Penney talk with LRPC and see what types of other people get involved in a project like this. S. Penney stated she would and also see what type of services they could provide for free. S. Williams added the State Office of Economic Development would also be a good contact. T. Roy suggested inviting them to our meetings as well. W. Curtin asked if someone from LRPC or Office of Economic Development could come and speak to us and help us generate the outline.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

None

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

S. Ames stated that now that the Site Plan Regulations are done we also need to start with the Subdivision Regulations. The Board agreed. S. Ames stated she had been working on them but would like to start scheduling workshops for that too and asked the Board to think about it and at the next meeting decide on a time available for another workshop. W. Curtin asked it be put on the next agenda.

S. Williams confirmed the next Zoning Delineation Workshop will be February 2nd at 5:00pm.

IX. OTHER BUSINESS

**Motion made by William Curtin to go into Non-public as allowed by RSA 91-A:3 2c
Seconded by Scott Williams; Roll call vote in favor: Dave Collier, Scott Williams,
Bill Curtin, Tim Roy, and Dave Hussey.**

Respectfully submitted,

Stacey Ames
Planning Assistant